

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Currently Amended) An implant comprising: at least one coupler having at least two connecting elements for engaging a first member to a second member; ~~wherein~~, the connecting elements permitting the first member to rotate with respect to the second member, and wherein the connecting elements are pins ~~that are~~ pivot-mounted in the first member, the first member being a bone plate having a screw hole extending from a top surface thereof to a bottom surface thereof sized and configured to receive the at least one coupler via the connecting elements.
3. (Original) The implant of claim 2, wherein the at least one coupler has an outer perimeter and the connecting elements extend from the outer perimeter.
4. (Currently Amended) The Implant of claim 2, wherein the at least one coupler has an outer perimeter and the connecting elements are spaced along the outer perimeter along a common axis defining an ~~axes~~ axis of rotation.
5. (Original) The implant of claim 2, wherein the first member has a through hole for receiving the coupler and the at least one coupler includes a borehole for receiving the second member.
6. (Original) The implant of claim 5, wherein the connecting elements are concentrically supported in the through hole formed in the first member.
7. (Original) The implant of claim 5, wherein the connecting elements are sized and configured for elastic deformation.
8. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 2, wherein the at least one coupler comprises a first coupler and a second coupler wherein each coupler has at least two connecting elements and wherein the first coupler has an inner hole sized and configured to receive the connecting elements of the second coupler.
9. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 8, wherein the first coupler is connected to the first member

via the connecting elements and the second coupler includes a borehole for receiving the second member.

10. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 9, wherein the first coupler permits rotation of the first member with respect to the second member about a first axis and the second coupler permits rotation of the first member with respect to the second member about a second axis.

11. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 10, wherein the first axis and the second axis are offset with respect to each other.

12. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 10, wherein the first axis and the second axis are perpendicular with respect to each other.

13. (Original) The implant of claim 2, wherein the connecting elements are tabs which are sized and configured to contact a through hole formed in the first member so that the first member can rotate with respect to the at least one coupler.

14. (Canceled).

15. (Currently Amended) The implant of claim [[14]] 2, wherein the second member is a bone screw and the at least one coupler further includes a borehole for receiving the bone screw so that the at least one coupler permits rotation of the bone screw with respect to the bone plate via the connecting elements.

16. (Original) The implant of claim 15, wherein the bone plate has a first thickness and the at least one coupler has a second thickness, the first thickness being greater than the second thickness.

17. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 15, wherein the borehole formed in the at least one coupler has a tapered surface and the bone screw has a conical screw head sized and configured to contact the tapered surface so that the bone screw can rotate with respect to the at least one coupler.

18. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 15, wherein the borehole formed in the at least one coupler includes an inner threading and the bone screw has an externally threaded bone screw head for threadingly engaging the inner threading.

19. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 15, wherein the bone screw has an expandable head and means for fixedly securing the head to the borehole.

20. (Original) The implant of claim 15, wherein the at least one coupler is a circular element with an outer perimeter having the at least two connecting elements extending from the outer perimeter, wherein the connecting elements are sized and configured to contact the screw hole formed in the bone plate so that the bone screw can rotate with respect to the bone plate about an axis of rotation.

21. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 15, wherein the at least one coupler comprises an inner coupler member and an outer coupler member, each member having at least two connecting elements.

22. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 21, wherein the outer coupler member has an outer perimeter and an inner perimeter, the outer perimeter being sized and configured to contact the screw hole formed in the bone plate via the connecting elements and wherein the inner perimeter is sized and configured to engage the inner coupler member via the connecting elements, the inner coupler member incorporating the borehole for receiving the bone screw.

23. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 22, wherein the connecting elements of the outer coupler member permits rotation of the bone screw with respect to the bone plate about a first axis and the connecting elements of the inner coupler member permits rotation of the bone screw with respect to the bone plate about a second axis, the first axis and the second axis being offset with respect to one another.

24. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 15, wherein the implant further comprises a second bone plate, the second bone plate having at least one screw hole for receiving a second coupler, the second coupler having a borehole for receiving the bone screw so that the second coupler is alignable with respect to the at least one coupler connected to the first bone plate so that the bone

screw can pass through the boreholes formed in the first and second couplers, respectively, at an oblique angle.

25. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 2, wherein the first member is a body of a pedicle screw having a first end and a second end, the first end having a transverse channel for receiving a longitudinal spinal rod and the second end having a borehole sized and configured to receive the at least one coupler via the connecting elements.

26. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 25, wherein the second member is a bone screw and the at least one coupler includes a screw hole for receiving the bone screw so that the at least one coupler permits rotation of the bone screw with respect to the body.

27. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 26, wherein the screw hole formed in the at least one coupler has a tapered surface and the bone screw has a conical screw head sized and configured to contact the tapered surface so that the bone screw can rotate with respect to the at least one coupler.

28. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 26, wherein the screw hole formed in the at least one coupler includes an inner threading and the bone screw has an externally threaded bone screw head for threadingly engaging the inner threading.

29. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 26, wherein the bone screw has an expandable head and means for fixedly securing the head to the borehole.

30. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 2, wherein the first member is a vertebral endplate having a borehole for receiving the at least one coupler via the connecting elements.

31. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 30, wherein the second member is a connecting member and the at least one coupler includes a hole for receiving the connecting member so that the at least one coupler permits rotation of the connecting member with respect to the vertebral endplate via the connecting elements.

32. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 31, wherein the implant includes two vertebral endplates,

each endplate having a borehole for receiving its respective coupler via the connecting elements, and wherein each coupler includes a hole for receiving an end of the connecting member so that the connecting member interconnects the vertebral endplates.

33. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 2, wherein the first member is an intervertebral implant having a body with a top vertebra engaging surface, a bottom vertebra engaging surface, and a plurality of side surfaces extending therebetween, and wherein at least one of the top and bottom vertebra surfaces includes a borehole which is sized and configured to receive the at least one coupler so that the at least one coupler can rotate with respect to the implant via the connecting elements.

34. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 33, wherein the top and bottom bone engaging surfaces each include a borehole for receiving a respective coupler via the connecting elements.

35. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 33, wherein the top and bottom vertebra engaging surfaces are convex.

36. (Withdrawn) The implant of claim 33, wherein the body further comprises at least one through hole extending from one side surface to another side surface.

37. (New) A bone plate, comprising:

a bone fixation element receiving hole extending through the bone plate along a hole axis from a first surface to a bone contacting surface thereof which, when the plate is mounted on a bone in a desired location faces the bone; and

a coupler pivotally mounted within the bone fixation element receiving hole, the coupler including first and second connecting elements engaging a wall of the bone fixation element receiving hole and including an opening therein for receiving a bone fixation element therein so that the bone fixation element may be pivoted relative to the hole axis.

38. (New) The bone plate of claim 38, wherein an inner wall of the coupler defining the opening

is threaded to threadedly engage a threaded head of a bone fixation element inserted therein.

39. (New) The bone plate of claim 37, wherein the first and second connecting elements are positioned on the coupler so that they define two substantially identical slots between an inner wall of the bone fixation element receiving hole and an outer surface of the coupler.

40. (New) The bone plate of claim 39, wherein the slots are substantially semi-circular.